

Iowa School Library Program Guidelines: Libraries, Literacy and Learning for the 21st Century

Good school library programs help students learn and help teachers teach. The best school libraries are centers of learning in their schools. They are permeated by a “culture of literacy,” where the development of skills and interest in reading, writing, listening, speaking and thinking are promoted and practiced. Reading widely and reading well are vital to participating effectively in an information society. Technology has profoundly impacted the school library, providing access to information that was once available in only the largest academic and research libraries. The Internet, far from making libraries obsolete, reinforces the need for instruction in critical thinking and evaluation of information. All of these are essential teaching areas for the school library. Technological and information literacies, along with reading development and promotion, are basic to the mission of the 21st century school library.

Responsibilities of the Teacher Librarian

The teacher librarian has two distinct areas of responsibility within the school program. First, the teacher librarian is a **teacher**, a member of the building instructional team. Because the library program serves everyone in the school, the teacher librarian has a unique perspective on the total school curriculum. In this role, s/he helps to identify appropriate resources, methodologies and technologies for instruction, and also sees gaps and duplications in teaching and can thus help guide overall curriculum planning. School libraries and teacher librarians have traditionally played an important role in supporting and enhancing the reading program of the school through support of classroom reading instruction and the provision of materials and activities that help students develop skills in reading for both information and pleasure. The teacher librarian is also responsible for one specialized area of the curriculum: that of helping students acquire skill in locating, interpreting, using, evaluating, creating and communicating information. This curriculum is generally referred to as information literacy and is best learned when information skills and concepts are integrated with classroom content in all areas.

The second area of responsibility of the teacher librarian is to effectively manage and operate the school library. This is the **librarian** role and involves planning for school library collections, technology, schedules and staff to assure the best possible access to resources and services for students and teachers in a positive, dynamic learning environment. Policies and procedures, hours of operation, scheduling of the facility, and selecting and organizing information resources are facets of this area of responsibility. Obtaining needed resources and managing the library budget are included in this role. Effective communication with the principal and school community, and connections with the larger learning community are other important functions.

For the school library program to support student learning effectively, careful attention must be given to both components of the library program. This requires that a qualified teacher librarian be present and available to work with students, teachers and staff in the library setting for an amount of time sufficient to perform all of the functions defined in the state standards. Staffing levels, as well as guidelines for each area of the teacher librarian's responsibility, are outlined in the section that follows.

In 2006 the following law was passed by the legislature and signed by Governor Tom Vilsack: "Beginning July 1, 2006, each school district shall have a qualified teacher librarian who shall be licensed by the board of educational examiners under chapter 272. The state board shall establish in rule a definition of and standards for an articulated sequential kindergarten through grade twelve media program (*Code of Iowa* 256.11(9)). Subsequently, the Board of Educational Examiners adopted the definition below and the standards that are the basis for the guidelines on the following pages. Library program is defined in the Iowa Administrative Code Rule 281—12.2(256) as follows:

"Library program" means an articulated, sequential kindergarten through grade 12 library or media program that enhances student achievement and is integral to the school district's curricula and instructional program. Library programs are planned and implemented by a qualified teacher librarian working collaboratively with the district's administration and instructional staff. The library program services provided to students and staff shall include the following:

- Support of the overall school curricula,
- Collaborative planning and teaching,
- Promotion of reading and literacy,
- Information literacy instruction,

- Access to a diverse and appropriate school library collection, and
- Learning enhancement through technologies.”

Library Program Guidelines

The Library Program Guidelines that follow have been designed to assist districts in planning for library programs to meet the new state requirements, and to go beyond the basic requirement to create programs that positively impact student learning and achievement. Three performance levels provide indicators of program status. “Level 1” is the minimum requirement established for all school library programs in IAC 12.3(12). “Level 2” describes a district that is making progress in providing sound school library programming. “Level 3” indicates “best practice” as established in national professional standards and literature. Programs at Level 3 provide comprehensive support for teaching, learning and student achievement goals.

The guidelines should be used as a checklist to audit the status of your program. As you plan for improvements in your school library program, review the guidelines and check the level you feel your program exemplifies at this time. Any category in which your program does not meet the state requirement should be seen as an area for immediate attention. Other areas that your district targets for improvements may be based on local needs and conditions.

To provide additional assistance in implementing the requirements, a number of documents are available on the State Library of Iowa Website

(<http://www.statelibraryofiowa.org/ld/school-librarians>). These include:

- a summary of data collected by the State Library of Iowa in its annual Survey of School Libraries. This data will allow local schools to compare themselves in terms of collections, budgets and staffing to schools of similar size throughout the state.
- a sample information literacy curriculum that can be adapted to suit local needs,
- sample policies,
- job descriptions and
- templates for reports and planning.

IOWA SCHOOL LIBRARY PROGRAM GUIDELINES

Three performance levels for school libraries are described in these guidelines. "Level 1" is the specific minimum requirement for school library programs established in the Iowa Administrative Code 12.3(12). "Level 2" describes a district that is making progress toward a sound school library program. "Level 3" indicates "best practice" as established in professional standards and literature. Level 3 programs provide maximum support for student achievement.

The program requirements are divided into the two areas for which the teacher librarian has specific responsibilities: 1) teaching and learning and 2) library program management. These are labeled "Program Components I and II". A third component that addresses specific program areas not required by the standard but are nonetheless essential to good school library programs has been included at the end of the document.

Program Component I: Teaching and Learning

I.1 PROGRAM AND EVALUATION

LEVEL 1 REQUIREMENT

- ☐ The board of directors of each school district has established a K-12 library program to support the student achievement goals of the total school curriculum.
- ☐ The library program supports the district's school improvement plan.
- ☐ The program is regularly reviewed and revised.

LEVEL 2 MAKING PROGRESS

- ☐ A sequential K-12 library program plan has been created by the teacher librarian(s) in consultation with a group that includes students, teachers, administrators and parents.
- ☐ The plan includes an information literacy curriculum and other elements required by the standard.
- ☐ The plan includes a library facility that accommodates a wide variety of activities.
- ☐ The board of directors has approved the library program plan.
- ☐ The teacher librarian prepares an annual report of school library program progress for the principal and other constituent groups.
- ☐ The teacher librarian completes the annual State Library survey and uses that and other data to assess the local program.
- ☐ The library program provides a positive climate that supports the learning of each student.

LEVEL 3 BEST PRACTICE

- ☐ The library program plan incorporates goals that reflect best practice as articulated by national, state and other professional groups.
- ☐ Progress toward the goals of the library program plan is reviewed and revised on a five-year cycle and incorporated into the district's curriculum review process.
- ☐ The impact of the library program on overall student achievement in the district is analyzed.
- ☐ Progress toward meeting the goals of the library program development plan is reflected in the district's Annual Progress Report.

Program Component I: Teaching and Learning

I.2 TEACHER LIBRARIAN STAFFING

LEVEL 1 REQUIREMENT

- ☐ A qualified teacher librarian, licensed by the board of educational examiners, works with students, teachers, support staff and administrators.
- ☐ The teacher librarian directs the library program and provides services and instruction in support of building curricular goals.

LEVEL 2 MAKING PROGRESS

- ☐ A minimum of one half-time qualified teacher librarian serves each attendance center in the district.
- ☐ The teacher librarian's time in each attendance center is sufficient to perform the program requirements
- ☐ The teacher librarian participates in the development of a schedule that provides maximum access to the library, its personnel and resources, and time for instruction.
- ☐ Support staff including technical support is provided to assist the teacher librarian in providing a comprehensive library program.

LEVEL 3 BEST PRACTICE

- ☐ At least one full-time qualified teacher librarian serves each attendance center in the district.
- ☐ Staffing increases with enrollment and program needs; schools of over 1000 students should have at least two f.t.e. teacher librarians and an appropriate level of support staff.
- ☐ The teacher librarian's schedule is fully flexible so that s/he can meet with teachers and classes whenever needed.
- ☐ A district-level library coordinator supports the library program.

I.3 CURRICULUM SUPPORT

LEVEL 1 REQUIREMENT

- ☐ The teacher librarian is a member of the building's instructional team with special expertise in identifying resources and technologies to support teaching and learning.

LEVEL 2 MAKING PROGRESS

- ☐ The teacher librarian meets regularly with classroom teachers and instructional teams.
- ☐ The school library program provides essential support to the curriculum through its collections and services.
- ☐ The teacher librarian purchases and actively promotes the use of resources and technology.

LEVEL 3 BEST PRACTICE

- ☐ The teacher librarian is a member of the building leadership team and participates in curriculum and content area initiatives.
- ☐ The teacher librarian promotes the use of research-based practice in teaching and learning.
- ☐ The teacher librarian is knowledgeable about student achievement data, local standards and district-wide curriculum.
- ☐ The teacher librarian serves on district-level curriculum review and development teams

Program Component I: Teaching and Learning

I.4 INFORMATION LITERACY CURRICULUM COLLABORATION

LEVEL 1 REQUIREMENT

- ☐ The teacher librarian and classroom teachers collaborate to develop, teach, and evaluate information literacy learning experiences.
- ☐ Instruction includes access, evaluation, use, creation, and communication of information and emphasizes use of inquiry and critical thinking.

LEVEL 2 MAKING PROGRESS

- ☐ A sequential K-12 library and information literacy curriculum that includes standards, benchmarks and objectives (indicators) has been developed.
- ☐ The information literacy curriculum is integrated with classroom content in some areas.
- ☐ An information search process model has been adopted.
- ☐ The teacher librarian provides instruction in the use of information resources including online databases and the Internet in collaboration with classroom teachers.
- ☐ The teacher librarian assesses student progress in collaboration with classroom teachers.
- ☐ Research engages students in questioning, problem solving and reflection.
- ☐ The curriculum includes instruction in the ethical use of information and technology.

LEVEL 3 BEST PRACTICE

- ☐ The information literacy curriculum is integrated into curriculum in all content areas where appropriate.
- ☐ Information literacy goals are incorporated into subject area curriculum guides.
- ☐ The teacher librarian works with classroom teachers to design authentic assignments that allow students to create new knowledge and develop life-long learning skills.

I.5 TECHNOLOGY AND LEARNING

LEVEL 1 REQUIREMENT

- ☐ The teacher librarian and classroom teachers collaborate to enhance learning and teaching through technology.

LEVEL 2 MAKING PROGRESS

- ☐ The teacher librarian has expertise in technology and plays a leadership role in building-level technology planning and use.
- ☐ The teacher librarian models and facilitates the use of instructional technology to support teaching and learning goals.
- ☐ The teacher librarian promotes or provides professional development on new technology.

LEVEL 3 BEST PRACTICE

- ☐ Technology is used to expand curriculum goals and support students in developing critical thinking and evaluation skills.
- ☐ The teacher librarian participates in district level technology planning.

Program Component I: Teaching and Learning

I.6 READING AND LITERACY

LEVEL 1 REQUIREMENT

- ☐ **The school library program promotes literacy through reader guidance and activities that develop capable and independent readers.**

LEVEL 2 MAKING PROGRESS

- ☐ The school library program contributes to improved reading achievement through its materials, programs and services.
- ☐ The school library provides access to print materials, both fiction and non-fiction, that are developmentally appropriate.
- ☐ The teacher librarian establishes relationships with students that promote the development of their reading interests and skills.
- ☐ The teacher librarian provides information on students' reading progress to teachers and parents.
- ☐ The teacher librarian's knowledge of literature enables him/her to recommend materials to support the literacy program.
- ☐ The teacher librarian is knowledgeable about reading strategies and assists in planning and implementing literacy goals across the curriculum.

LEVEL 3 BEST PRACTICE

- ☐ The teacher librarian is a catalyst for a culture of literacy in the school.
- ☐ The teacher librarian collaborates in planning and assessing the district literacy program.

I.7 COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

LEVEL 1 REQUIREMENT

- ☐ **The school library makes connections with parents and the community.**

LEVEL 2 MAKING PROGRESS

- ☐ The school library promotes and provides access to AEA services and requests that resources be purchased by the AEA to support local programs.
- ☐ The teacher librarian provides regular reports of school library program accomplishments and concerns to the students, teachers, principal and community.
- ☐ The library Web site is used to communicate library programs and curriculum ties.
- ☐ The teacher librarian collaborates with local public library staff.

LEVEL 3 BEST PRACTICE

- ☐ A library advisory group, which includes students, teachers, parents, and other community members, meets regularly and contributes to planning library goals and activities.
- ☐ Teacher librarians make connections with parents, local librarians, businesses and other groups to form partnerships in support of learning.
- ☐ The teacher librarian supports teachers in utilizing community resources.

Program Component II: Library Management

II.1 COLLECTION

LEVEL 1 REQUIREMENT

- ☐ The library includes a current and diverse collection of fiction and non-fiction in a variety of formats to support student and curriculum needs.
- ☐ The library program provides for methods to improve library collections to meet student and staff needs.

LEVEL 2 MAKING PROGRESS

- ☐ The library collection contains materials that represent diverse opinions on controversial topics and are multicultural and gender fair.
- ☐ There is a plan in place to develop the collection to support curriculum units and diverse learning needs. Teachers and students provide input into the plan.
- ☐ Items in the library collection are regularly evaluated for retention, replacement or withdrawal.
- ☐ Written procedures for efficient ordering, cataloging, processing, circulation and inventory are in place.
- ☐ Circulation, cataloging, scheduling, loan periods and other routines are designed to maximize access and promote learning.

LEVEL 3 BEST PRACTICE

- ☐ The collection is current and varied. Resources in multiple formats are provided. There is an appropriate balance between print and electronic resources.
- ☐ The collection is aligned with the school's curriculum. The collection extends into the classrooms for both print and electronic resources.
- ☐ Number of items per student should be sufficient to meet needs with due consideration given to the age of library materials.

II.2 ELECTRONIC RESOURCES

LEVEL 1 REQUIREMENT

- ☐ Electronic resources are provided to assure that students become skillful and discriminating users of information.

LEVEL 2 MAKING PROGRESS

- ☐ The library provides access to the Internet and a variety of subscription databases and instruction in their use.
- ☐ An electronic library catalog and circulation system provides access to library collections via a school-wide network.
- ☐ A well-designed library web page serves as a portal to information resources.

LEVEL 3 BEST PRACTICE

- ☐ A library network provides students with access to a variety of information resources within the school and from their homes or other remote sites.
- ☐ Library systems generate a variety of data to assess the library collection and program.
- ☐ The teacher librarian promotes the adoption of promising emerging electronic resources.

Program Component II: Library Management

II.3 COMPUTERS

LEVEL 1 REQUIREMENT

- ☐ **Current technology is provided to assure that students become skillful and discriminating users of information.**

LEVEL 2 MAKING PROGRESS

- ☐ Up-to-date, networked computers and other equipment within the library or managed by library staff are available in sufficient numbers to meet student and staff needs.
- ☐ Computers and network access are available throughout the building.
- ☐ Appropriate multimedia technology is provided for student and staff production and instructional support.
- ☐ Technical support for library and classroom systems is provided. Technical problems are dealt with promptly.

LEVEL 3 BEST PRACTICE

- ☐ New technologies are identified and added to libraries when appropriate to instructional needs.
- ☐ Portable computers are available for circulation to students for at home use.

II.4 UPDATING RESOURCES

LEVEL 1 REQUIREMENT

- ☐ **A plan for annual updating and replacing of library materials, supports, and equipment is in place.**

LEVEL 2 MAKING PROGRESS

- ☐ The library program is funded at a level sufficient to update materials and equipment in support the curriculum and other school program goals.
- ☐ The teacher librarian submits an annual budget request that includes library resources and supplies as well as computers and other equipment that support the curriculum and other school program goals.
- ☐ A long-range budget plan includes funds for facility improvements, staff, emerging technologies, professional development and other needs.

LEVEL 3 BEST PRACTICE

- ☐ Funding supports a large, current and diverse library collection to support classroom literacy efforts and other building curriculum needs.
- ☐ Bond issues, grants, school fundraising, and business partnerships supplement the budget.
- ☐ Significant annual progress is made toward both short and long-term goals for updating library resources.

Program Component II: Library Management

II.5 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

LEVEL 1 REQUIREMENT

- ☐ Access or support for professional development for the teacher librarian is provided.

LEVEL 2 MAKING PROGRESS

- ☐ The teacher librarian regularly participates in library science professional development through the AEAs, professional organizations, public libraries, the State Library and other agencies.
- ☐ The teacher librarian has developed and is implementing a professional development plan.
- ☐ The teacher librarian participates in building and district library support staff.
- ☐ Time is provided for district library staff to meet.
- ☐ Funding for professional development is available.

LEVEL 3 BEST PRACTICE

- ☐ The teacher librarian is encouraged to attend professional development opportunities and to share new ideas with the school and district.
- ☐ The teacher librarian is an active member of the state's library association.
- ☐ The teacher librarian is a member of national professional library associations.

II.6 POLICIES

LEVEL 1 REQUIREMENT

- ☐ The board of directors has adopted policies to address selection and reconsideration of school library materials; confidentiality of student library records; and legal and ethical use of information resources, including plagiarism and intellectual property rights.

LEVEL 2 MAKING PROGRESS

- ☐ Staff, students and parents are informed of policies
- ☐ Instruction, effective signage and periodic notices are used to reinforce policies with students and staff.

LEVEL 3 BEST PRACTICE

- ☐ Policies are reviewed and updated on a regular basis.

Program Component III: Support, Access, and Facilities

The following elements, while not specifically required by IAC 12.3(12), are highly correlated with successful school library programs.

III.1 SUPPORT STAFF

- ☐ Support staff is provided to assist the teacher librarian in providing comprehensive service.
- ☐ Support staff numbers increase with enrollment and program needs.
- ☐ Support staff have a clear understanding of their responsibilities. They are well trained, and function independently in support of the library program.
- ☐ Job descriptions outlining specific duties and required technology skills are in place.
- ☐ Support staff is available to circulate materials and assist students.
- ☐ Volunteers are used appropriately to assist with library routines.

III.2 ACCESS

- ☐ Students and staff may use the library before and after school.
- ☐ Students are able to come to the library when needed.
- ☐ Classes use the library when curriculum requires the use of information resources.
- ☐ Flexible scheduling and policies provide students with access to the library during all hours that the school is in session, as well as some evening and summer hours.
- ☐ Study halls and scheduled classes do not limit access to the library.
- ☐ A library Web site provides virtual access to library resources at all times.

III.3 FACILITY

- ☐ The school library facility supports multiple teaching and learning activities occurring simultaneously.
- ☐ The facility's arrangement, signage and displays help to create a climate for learning in the library.
- ☐ Security systems are in place if appropriate
- ☐ Multiple classes and small groups can be accommodated in the library

The facility includes:

- ☐ whole class instruction area
- ☐ small group area
- ☐ large group area
- ☐ work area for staff
- ☐ media production area
- ☐ computer lab or area
- ☐ sufficient storage
- ☐ adequate wiring
- ☐ wireless access